(iii) Improved vigilance at various levels and strict penal action against those involved in malpractices, including action against staff responsible for issuing ineligible ration cards and persons found in possession of such ration cards are being emphasized.

(iv) Introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operation at various levels, smart-card-based delivery of essential commodities, use of global positioning system on vehicles transporting TPDS commodities and bar coding of ration cards, etc. is being piloted.

Adulteration in rice supplied for school children and PDS

2075.SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether CAG team conducted surprise check and found that the rice which was being provided for school children was adulterated and unfit for human consumption and there is no mechanism in place to check the quality of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to supply fair average qualities (FAQ) of foodgrains for school children as well as for PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Performance Audit Report (No. 13 of 2008) of C&AG, during the surprise visits to the schools of 4 States (Orissa, Punjab, Haryana and Tripura), C&AG's audit team found that rice supplied to some of the schools under Mid-day Meal Scheme in Haryana, Punjab and Orissa was adulterated and unfit for human consumption. Test checks of schools in Orissa, West Bengal and Assam showed that there was no mechanism in place to check the quality and quantity of foodgrains.

(c) The following steps have been taken by the Government to supply Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of foodgrains for school children as well as for PDS:

(i) The Fair Average Quality foodgrains conforming to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) Standards are issued for Mid-day Meal Scheme and PDS.

(ii) Adequate opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UT Administrations to inspect the stocks prior to lifting from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns.

(iii) Instructions had been issued to all the State Governments/UT Administrations that an officer not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before lifting from the FCI godowns.

(iv) The samples of foodgrains are jointly drawn and sealed by the officers of the State Governments/UT Administrations and the FCI from the stocks for display at the counters of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) for the benefit of consumers.

(v) The officers of the State Governments and the Ministry pay surprise checks to the FPSs, to oversee the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.

Inclusion of pulses and edible oils in PDS items

2076.SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the protein contents in food available to the poorer section is very low;

(b) whether Government has any plan to include pulses in the list of ration materials for the poorer section;

(c) whether Government is contemplating to include edible oil in the list of ration materials; and

(d) if so, the details of the programme of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in its 61st Round survey (2004-05) has observed that there has been a marginal reduction in the per-capita consumption of pulses - by 6.6% in rural and 4.6% in urban areas.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. Government has recently introduced a scheme under which the Public Sector Agencies like National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), MMTC, PEC Ltd and State Trading Corporation (STC) can import pulses and sell the same at a subsidy of Rs.10/- per kg to the State Governments for distribution of pulses through Public Distribution System (PDS). It will be the responsibility of the State Government to ensure that pulses imported under the scheme are lifted and the targeted consumers get it. The scheme, therefore, aims at augmenting availability of pulses within the country through imports specifically for supplying to the poorer sections through PDS at a subsidized price.

Government launched a scheme on 28.07.2008 to distribute one million tons of edible oils to States/UTs at a subsidy @ Rs.15/kg. Orders were placed for import of 3.60 lakh tons of edible oils. Of this, about 3.34 lakh tons of edible oil has landed; and about 1.82 lakh tons have so far been distributed to various States/UTs by Central PSUs for distribution to ration card holders @ 1 kg per ration card per month.

Profits made by MNCs engaged in trading of foodgrains

2077.SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in spite of shortage of foodgrains and crisis in their supply in the world, the profit of multinational companies such as Monsanto, Kargil, Sinzenta, Banj and Nobel is increasing continuously;